
Press release

UK to expand submarine programme in response to Strategic Defence Review

The UK will build up to a dozen new attack submarines to keep Britain safe.

From: **Ministry of Defence** (</government/organisations/ministry-of-defence>), **Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street** (</government/organisations/prime-ministers-office-10-downing-street>), **The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP** (</government/people/keir-starmer>) and **The Rt Hon John Healey MP** (</government/people/john-healey>)

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SSN-AUKUS concept image

- UK to build up to 12 attack submarines as part of AUKUS programme in response to the rapidly increasing threats
- Builds on £15 billion investment set out for the UK's sovereign nuclear warhead programme, keeping the UK safe for generations to come and delivering on the Plan for Change
- Nuclear investments will transform critical parts of the defence nuclear industry, directly supporting 30,000 highly skilled jobs up-and-down the country and the doubling of apprentice and graduate roles across the next ten years.

The Prime Minister will announce tomorrow that the UK's conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine fleet will be significantly expanded, with up to 12 new SSN-AUKUS boats to be built.

The increase in submarines will transform the UK's submarine building industry and, following the £15 billion investment in the warhead programme outlined, will deliver on this government's Plan for Change, supporting 30,000 highly skilled jobs up-and-down the country well into the 2030s, as well as helping work to deliver 30,000 apprenticeships and 14,000 graduate roles across the next ten years.

The announcement comes as the government unveils its new Strategic Defence Review tomorrow. The externally-led review is expected to recommend that our Armed Forces move to warfighting readiness to deter the growing threats faced by the UK. The report makes 62 recommendations, which the government is expected to accept in full.

Responding to the report, the government will make significant commitments to its armed forces and deliver greater security for working people through the government's Plan for Change.

That includes:

- A landmark shift in our deterrence and defence: moving to warfighting readiness to deter threats and strengthen security in the Euro Atlantic area;
- Increasing stockpiles of munitions and support equipment, ensuring that production capacities can rapidly scale up in response to crises or war;
- The procurement of up to 7,000 UK-built long-range weapons for the UK Armed Forces, supporting around 800 defence jobs, and boosting our military capabilities
- A new CyberEM Command to put the UK at the forefront of cyber operations, alongside £1bn investment in pioneering digital capability; and
- Improving the lives of thousands of British military personnel and their families through more than £1.5 billion of additional funding to repair and renew armed forces housing.

The Prime Minister is expected to say:

“From the supply lines to the front lines, this government is foursquare behind the men and women upholding our nation’s freedom and security.

“National security is the foundation of my Plan for Change, and this plan will ensure Britain is secure at home and strong abroad, while delivering a defence dividend of well-paid jobs up and down the country.

“This Strategic Defence Review will ensure the UK rises to the challenge and our Armed Forces have the equipment they need that keeps us safe at home while driving greater opportunity for our engineers,

shipbuilders and technicians of the future.”

Alongside the commitment to expand the UK’s conventionally armed attack submarine fleet, the government is securing the future of the Royal Navy’s Continuous At Sea Nuclear Deterrent, backed by a £15 billion investment into the sovereign warhead programme in this parliament and supporting more than 9,000 jobs.

It is the first time the UK has outlined the full scale of its investment plans in its warhead programmes and is further evidence of the Government’s triple lock commitment to the nuclear deterrent: to maintain our continuous at-sea deterrent; to build the new fleet of Dreadnought submarines; and to deliver all future upgrades necessary.

This will see significant modernisation of infrastructure at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) in Aldermaston and supporting more than 9,000 jobs at the Berkshire site, and thousands more across the UK supply chain – from Scotland to Somerset.

The nuclear warhead programme includes some of the most advanced and sensitive science, engineering and manufacturing facilities in the UK.

Both the UK’s sovereign warhead programme and the UK’s conventionally-armed submarine fleet will make Britain and NATO safe for decades to come.

Defence Secretary John Healey MP said:

“Our outstanding submariners patrol 24/7 to keep us and our allies safe, but we know that threats are increasing and we must act decisively to face down Russian aggression. ”

“With new state-of-the-art submarines patrolling international waters and our own nuclear warhead programme on British shores, we are making Britain secure at home and strong abroad, while delivering on our Plan for Change with 30,000 highly-skilled jobs across the country.”

Already supporting more than 400,000 skilled British jobs, UK defence is a crucial engine for economic growth, delivering on the government’s Plan for Change – supported by the Government’s historic uplift in defence spending to 2.5% of GDP from 2027, and the ambition to hit 3% in the next parliament, when economic and fiscal conditionals allow.

Currently the UK is set to operate 7 Astute Class attack submarines, which will be replaced with an increased fleet of up to 12 SSN-AUKUS submarines from the late 2030s.

The boost to the SSN-AUKUS programme will see a major expansion of industrial capability at Barrow and Raynesway, Derby, with the build of a new submarine every 18 months in the future.

The increase in capacity at the two sites will allow the UK to increase its fleet to up to 12 attack boats, as part of the AUKUS partnership.

To ensure the demands of this expanded programme can be met, government is working closely with industry partners to rapidly expand training and development opportunities, aiming to double defence and civil nuclear apprentice and graduate intakes. This will result in 30,000 apprenticeships and 14,000 graduate roles over the next ten years.

The SDR calls for significant investment into the UK sovereign warhead programme this parliament, while maintaining the existing stockpile.

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